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The Legend of the Rose



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Chapter 1 by JM

You can see her sometimes when the sky is clear and the moons are round and bright. Always, she perches on the edge of the easternmost window of the Rose Tower; always, she sits so still that she is like a sister to the stone gargoyles standing sentinel to the rest of the palace.

Chapter 2 by JM



Some people do not believe she is alive at all; they watch her for hours on end for any sign of life--a twitch here, a yawn there, a repositioning of her body, anything at all--but she does not move. It's a hoax, these people claim. An attempt by the royal family to draw people to their courts, where their treasurers work tirelessly to smooth talk donations from anyone foolish enough to wander away from the crowd.

She is as real as anyone else, though, and she has a story as personal as yours.

They call her the Rose Girl, and this is her legend.

Chapter 3 by jaiiy



She used to be a normal human girl living in an alternate reality. Her name was Rose. She liked sunsets, cheesy romance movies, and her favorite perfumes were all flowery-scented. Aside from her name, she was really normal and had a normal, decent life. That is, until the best and worst day of her life.

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You know how in some songs, artists describe their love as "falling hard"? Well, she fell down a deep, shimmering, beautiful, painted canvas of a tunnel and she fell more everyday. Her affection was like a silky ribbon, pretty, but if she pulled it too tight around her neck, it would choke her. You see, she loved too hard. Her heart was too large. She was filled with too much warmth.

And of course, Thorn had to leave.

Chapter 4 by Queen of Words



Thorn was created, created by an awful ruler in her alternate reality. The ruler would spend hours inside of his White House, working on concoctions to make him younger. And then one day, he emerged from his basement, victorious. In his hands was a tiny thing, almost a monster from how aged it was. The ruler smiled. He no longer needed a wig, or a fake tan. He had an immortal being that he could transfer his age to. He decided to name it Thorn.

A while later, in fact, eons later, the ruler, no longer a ruler but a dictator, decided that Thorn needed a protector. Someone who could defend Thorn from all sorts of evils. And then he came across an ad for a babysitter. The babysitter's name was Rose.

Smiling invitingly, the ruler led Rose down into his basement. There, he changed her, changed her for good.

She came out with golden cat eyes and a determined stillness that couldn't be distracted. The dictator had altered her so that she could travel through different realities. He altered her so that she had a hundred times the strength before. And he altered her so that she could read minds.

He immediately put her to work guarding Thorn.

Her heart burst whenever she was around him. His thoughts were tortured and dim, flickering and then coming back to life. Thorn had barely any life in him. And Rose knew how to help him. She wanted to desperately, for the more she helped him, the more she fell for him.

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Rose was a puma. A *dire* puma. And no matter how *dire* Rose was, it blanched in comparison to Thorn's life. She, the guard, laid next to Thorn, transferring her life force into him.

Well, not exactly. She was transferring her capabilities into Thorn.

Escape, tortured one. Escape in the morning with what I have given you.

He rustled in his sleep. He dreamt of bread, oh that simplest of things, and water. She planted the idea of riches in his mind. He rejected it, regarding it as foolish and impossible. She fell asleep, him between her paws, wrapped by her tail, like her own child.

She hoped he would wake in the morning and see what she'd done, that he could escape, that he could be free from the dictator's claw.

And she? She would be ready to face whatever that stupid overlord had to offer.

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